

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJ: SWISS MILITARY DEPT VIEW OF US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

1. SUMMARY: TAGES ANZEIGER, JULY 26, PUBLISHED
EXCERPTS OF PURPORTED SWISS MILITARY DEPT INTERNAL GENERAL
STAFF MEMO ON WORLD POLITICAL-MILITARY
SITUATION THAT DESCRIBED US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY
AS EXPRESSION OF TRADITIONAL US MISSIONARY SPIRIT BUT THAT
CARRIES DANGER OF THREATENING VITAL WESTERN INTERESTS.
EDITORIAL COMMENT CRITICIZED MILITARY DEPT
"DEEP THINKERS" FOR TAKING NEGATIVE ATTITUDE ON
IMPORTANT AND DELICATE INTERNATIONAL ISSUE. END
SUMMARY.

2. MEMORANDUM PURPORTEDLY STATED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S
POLICY OF EMPHASIZING HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES
FOLLOWED BY PRESIDENT WILSON AND JOHN FOSTER DULLES.
LATTER WANTED TO ROLL BACK COMMUNISM IN EASTERN
EUROPE. MEMO REPORTEDLY SUGGESTED THAT DULLES' POLICY
MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO UNFORTUNATE 1956 HUNGARIAN
REVOLT. THIS TYPE OF REACTION IS "PRINCIPLE DANGER"
IN VIEW OF CURRENT UNREST CREATED BY DETENTE IN
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MOST IMPORTANT EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, AND STRONG
CRITICISM OF SOVIET REGIME. REACTION HAS BEEN AN
EXAGGERATED SOVIET DESIRE FOR SECURITY WHILE
"SITUATION OF DISSIDENTS HAS DETERIORATED SINCE
BEGINNING OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFENSIVE." THEREFORE, CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CAUTION
BY WEST WOULD BE APPROPRIATE. ACCORDING TO TAGES ANZEIGER

MEMO STATED PRESIDENT CARTER'S EFFORTS "HAVE ALREADY CAUSED PROBLEMS WITH SEVERAL FRIENDLY STATES" AND IT WILL BE SEEN, SOONER OR LATER, WHETHER HE IS PREPARED TO "FRIVOUSLY RISK VITAL WESTERN INTERESTS" BECAUSE REGIMES OF MANY STRATEGICALLY LOCATED COUNTRIES FRIENDLY TO THE WEST DO NOT MEET HIS HIGH IDEALS.

3. TAGES ANZEIGER COMMENTED EDITORIALY THAT ABOVE EXCERPT CAME FROM FIVE-PAGE INTERNAL MEMO INTENDED ONLY FOR GENERAL STAFF OFFICERS. COMMENT CONTINUED THAT MILITARY DEPT "DEEP THINKERS" APPEAR TO HAVE FORGOTTEN RECENT PERIOD OF EXCESSES IN US FOREIGN AFFAIRS THAT CARTER IS OBLIGED TO CORRECT TO REMAIN CREDIBLE BEFORE US CONGRESS AND PUBLIC. HOWEVER, IT IS TRUE THAT "INTERJECTION OF MORALITY IN US FOREIGN POLICY OFTEN APPEARS IMPROVISED." COMMENT NOTED RECENT RESERVATIONS ABOUT US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY EXPRESSED BY HELMUT SCHMIDT AND GISCARD D'ESTAING. EDITORIAL NOTED THAT SWISS FEDERAL COUNCILOR (FOREIGN MINISTER) GRABER HAD SPOKEN OUT FULLY ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN MARCH PARLIAMENT SESSION, BUT SAID FEDERAL POLITICAL DEPT WISHED TO DOWN-PLAY SWISS HUMAN RIGHTS POSITION WITH RESERVATIONS, AS SEEN BY LATEST MANEUVERS AT BELGRADE CSCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOLLOW-UP MEETING. IT CONTINUED THAT RESERVATIONS ON PART OF A SMALL STATE REQUIRE PRUDENCE AND DISCRETION. THEREFORE, PAPER SAID, IT MAKES LITTLE SENSE FOR MILITARY DEPT GENERAL STAFF TO EXPOSE ITSELF ON THIS DIFFICULT ISSUE, ESPECIALLY AFTER RECENT CITATION OF SWISS MILITARY DEPT FOR ITS TREATMENT OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS.

4. EMBASSY COMMENT: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT PUBLISHED EXCERPTS CAME FROM ADMINISTRATIVELY CONTROLLED INTERNAL MILITARY DEPT MEMO WHICH WAS ONLY INTENDED FOR RELATIVELY FEW SENIOR OFFICERS OF GENERAL STAFF. ALTHOUGH A STAFF STUDY, WE HAVE NO INFO THAT IT HAS OFFICIAL STANDING, I.E., APPROVAL OF FEDERAL COUNCIL OR EVEN FEDERAL COUNCILOR (DEFENSE MINISTER) GNAEGLI. IN FACT, WE HAVE INFORMAL INDICATIONS FEDERAL POLITICAL DEPT (FDP) NOT ALTOGETHER IN SYMPATHY WITH MEMOS THRUST OR ITS RATIONALE. FDP RESERVATIONS ABOUT OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY - TO THE EXTENT CONCERNS HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED - CENTER MORE ON ITS POSSIBLE IMPACT ON DETENTE AND SITUATION OF EASTERN EUROPEAN DISSIDENTS THAN ON OUR ANTI-

COMMUNIST ALLIES WHOSE RIGHTS RECORD IS BAD.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Event:
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